The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching

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Robert McAfee Brown: A Mighty Fortress

Fred D. Ordway • In the Love of Truth
Everett W. Palmer • Revolution-Starting Words
John Paul Pack • Whom Shall We Please?
Eugene Carson Blake • The Desert Shall Bloom
William Kirkland • Powers and Principalities
Martin E. Marty • The Mask of Humility
Roy Pearson • Catch Us the Little Foxes

WILLIAM E. HULME • THE WAY OF SANCTIFICATION

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PULPIT POST

"Underpaid Disgust"

SIR: Leslie Conrad's article on "Preacher, You're Underpaid!" is very interestingly written, although it probably does not add too much to the minister's knowledge of his own financial situation. He gives only two things which the preacher can do about it:

(1) Organize forces across denominational lines and employ public relations experts to fight their salary battles for them; (2) "Hand in your resignation and demit the ministry in a fit of underpaid disgust."

He obviously does not expect the minister to do this second, but, put into less sarcastic phraseology, I wonder whether this might not have several merits. If a minister is really good in his own profession, he has qualifications which are in demand in other vocations. He could still serve the Lord as a layman. It surely is no secret that the lay movement of the church is in great need of people who are literate about the Bible and who have some understanding of the nature and purpose of the Christian church.

If all good ministers who are now serving churches at unrealistically low salaries would resign to take "secular" positions, there would really be a shortage of preachers. This would automatically take care of some of those over-churched situations, both in difficult city areas and in small towns.

And what an awakening some smug churches would get to watch their ministers win respect in some other professions and at the same time take influential responsibilities as laymen in the church! It would take a great deal of Christian grace for an ex-pastor to go into any church as a layman and exert his influence to see that his pastor received a reasonable salary, but surprising things are sometimes required of those who really intend to serve the Lord!

Of course, if a minister is to do this courageous thing, one requirement for its effectiveness would be for him to be honest about why he is resigning. To try to be tactful and say it is because of his health or because he thinks he is more suited to a different calling would take away some of the power of his testimony.

But hardest of all, he would not dare to do it "in a fit of underpaid disgust."

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The Pulpit

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Memo:

WHY not do away with Christian missions abroad? The doors have closed in China. For years they have been almost shut in Islamic countries. They are apparently closing in India. Now the wisest counselors are telling missionaries in Africa below the Sahara they had better plan to do all foreign missionaries can do within five years, as they have no guarantee their presence will be tolerated longer than that. Why bother to continue the struggle to maintain an enterprise whose welcome is running out?

There are adequate reasons for maintaining and extending, with such adaptations as are wise and necessary, the Christian mission abroad. But the present upsurge against it requires that we take account of criticisms and occasions for resistance.

Communist countries eliminate missionaries because Christianity is believed to be only a cultural aspect of western colonialism. They say Christianity diverts people from consideration of their own social ills and weakens their capacity for resistance to exploitation. Some Americans criticize Christian missions because missions did not keep China from going communist.

Other Americans discount missionary activity because they say missions encourage people to entertain ideas of self-determination before they are ready for independence. They stir up the people. Missionaries make it harder for some of our businesses to make profits. They break down ancient religions and social forms and so contribute to disorder and disruption. When all this happens the people who stand to benefit in the long run show little gratitude. They generally give little promise of returning to denominational treasuries the money we have invested in their conversion.

It is charged that the impact of Christian missions is small compared to what we have been led by success-promotion techniques to believe it has been. It is said that the collective impression left by certain superstitions which parade under the name of Christianity is on balance larger than is the influence of responsible denominations. So why keep up the struggle?

There are good reasons. First, we have an obligation to bear a witness to the truth. With all due respect to the other ethnic faiths, (and we should have and show this respect), believers in the Christian faith have an irrepressible obligation to present the gospel of Jesus Christ and let the world judge for itself concerning its truth. Second, Christianity has provided the spiritual basis for a world society. No other faith or ideology has done so. A United Nations official whose work requires him to travel continuously between the capitals of the underdeveloped countries said to a secretary of the World Council of Churches: What these countries need most is men and women who have, in addition to educational and technical competence, the vision and motivation of Protestant missionaries. Protestant missions have helped provide a pattern for development in their hospitals and schools; more important, they have demonstrated the power of right incentive.

Missionaries have encouraged and trained the leaders of many of the new nations, who are claiming their rightful heritage of freedom and equality. They should be praised, not condemned, for this. In place of tribalism and collectivism, which subordinate the individual, Christians have lifted up the individual and taught him how to exercise freedom in a responsible way. Christian ideas of the sacredness of personality have led and are leading to the emancipation of women and children, to the liberation of outcasts and racially subordinate groups. This is a worthy service. Many missionaries have also spoken for humanity in defiance of western governments or tyrannical native regimes. The humanization of western policy toward native peoples has depended in part at least on Christian influence at home and abroad.

Christian missions can take credit for providing the incentives and ideas for systems of public education and public health; for inculcating a higher standard for public affairs; for developing more adequate communications. But their most important contribution has been to the mind and spirit of the Christians in the sending countries. Impelled by the conviction that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, these Christians have witnessed to the truth as they have been privileged to know it. They have been chastened and enriched in the process, and can be depended upon to continue it, at no matter what cost, and in whatever ways are open. *H.E.F.*

A Mighty Fortress

By Robert McAfee Brown

SHORTLY after the conclusion of World War II, when diplomatic relations between Finland and Russia were almost at the breaking point, a group of Finnish statesmen left for Moscow on a very delicate mission. A few patriotic Finns assembled at the railway station to see them off. The Communists turned out in full force, and as the train was about to leave the station the Communists burst forth with the strains of the Communist Internationale. But before the Internationale had concluded, the minority, at great personal peril because the Communists had the guns, began singing another song which gave the departing diplomats a different kind of send-off. Gradually through the station first one voice and then another joined in the singing.

> A mighty Fortress is our God,
> A Bulwark never failing;
> Our Helper He amid the flood
> Of mortal ills prevailing.
> For still our ancient foe
> Doth seek to work us woe. . . .

There is something about this hymn of Martin Luther's which *does* speak to people in real need, and which does, in a most remarkable way, express the real genius of the Protestant faith. The hymn is a kind of extended commentary which Luther wrote on the 46th Psalm, especially the first two verses, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear . . . ."

What do the words of this text and this hymn say to us in our own situation? Let me suggest four possibilities.

I

The first thing we are told about, of course, is *God.* We are not first of all given an analysis of our situation, we are not told to "buck up," we are not offered gimmicks and solutions for difficulties we are simply confronted with a monumental truth: "*God* is. . . ." Is what? "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

Of course, to a lot of people, perhaps to you this seems to be just backwards. God is fine, we believe, when things are going all right. Then we trust him, we worship him, we love him. But let things get a little frantic, let real trouble invade our lives, let "the flood of mortal ills" engulf us, and our reaction becomes one of doubt and distrust and a feeling that we have been cheated. Why should God let this happen to us? What kind of a God is this anyway? Can there even be a God if things like this happen? For most of us, in other words, "trouble" and "mortal ills" are precisely the things which challenge our faith in God. They make us doubt.

But not for Luther, not for the psalmist, not for a virile Protestant faith that is anchored squarely on the God that Luther and the psalmist are telling us about. No, to them it was precisely in the *midst* of trouble, conflict, mortal ills, that the reality of God was most apparent to them. The psalmist did not write, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help when things are going well." He wrote, "a very present help *in trouble.*" Luther did not write, "Our helper he when crops are good and everybody has lots of food." He wrote, "Our helper he amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing."

Now for some people this could be very cheap talk. There are lots of people who talk about the "value of suffering," or the way in which disaster can turn people back to God. Most of the people who talk that way are very comfortable and secure or they would not sentimentalize about stark tragedy and human disaster. But we can exempt Martin Luther from the cheap talkers. He knew what the flood of mortal ills was all about, because he had had to swim in it for a long time. When he wrote these words there was a price on his head he was worth more dead than alive. And we can exempt the psalmist from the cheap talkers; he was part of a group of people, the Jews, who were

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always in trouble, always on the verge of national catastrophe, always being invaded and conquered. No, from such tongues as these, the words have an authentic ring. Here are people who have been up to their necks in trouble, and who have said to us, "These are the times when God is real. We don't have to do with a weak God, or a timid retiring God." And so, the words they used to describe what God was like to them in times of trouble were strong words: "Fortress," even better, "a *mighty* fortress." "Bulwark" — even better "a bulwark *never* failing." "Refuge," "strength," "a present help."

That is the first truth, then. God is found in the midst of trouble, conflict, mortal ills. If he is not there, he is not worth much anywhere else. So rather than being the things which make us disbelieve in God, trouble, conflict, mortal ills are precisely the places where we can find God most surely. That is what Luther and the psalmist tell us. And to many of us, it is a rather new idea.

II

Luther then tells us that in addition to this mighty fortress, there are forces of opposition, forces Luther did not hesitate to call devils. He writes,

> For still our ancient foe
> Doth seek to work us woe;
> His craft and power are great,
> And armed with cruel hate,
> On earth is not his equal.

And then in the third verse he goes on to talk about "This world with devils filled," and "the Prince of Darkness grim."

Now do not dismiss this with a wave of your hand and say, "We can skip over all that because everybody knows that there's no devil walking around in red tights with horns, a pitchfork and a tail, breathing fire and making people do the wrong thing." We need not have the medieval picture Luther probably had, to be tragically aware that what he is writing about is no medieval fiction but a modern fact. This world *is* filled with devils, with all sorts of forces working evil and havoc in human life. This should be a fact that nobody has to dispute today. A well-known British philosopher once remarked, "I would find it very difficult to believe in God, but I have no difficulty whatsoever believing in the devil." He meant, of course, that the power of evil is much more apparent in the world than the power of good.

You can supply your own examples of the terrifying demonic forces at work in the world today, but do not conclude your list by thinking only of things like communism or communist leaders. For an even more vivid sense of what Luther meant, take a look within yourself. Anyone who is honest can see lurking within him all sorts of explosive forces that can spell disaster. And the insidious thing about this power of evil is that it is not for a moment confined to evil things. There is nothing, no matter how good, which cannot be turned to evil uses. Think of a marriage which is no more than two people trying to dominate or exploit one another. Or think of religion. Most people today seem to think that religion is "a good thing." But it can be a terribly evil thing as well. In the name of the Prince of Peace Christians have slaughtered fellow Christians in wars of religion. In the name of religious faith nations have gone to war against other nations. Today we use religion to justify our comfortable middle-class existence, or we nod with approval when our national leader says, "America is great because America is good," and our politicians talk glibly about "this nation under God," a slogan which ought to terrify us rather than make us complacent. No, the disturbing thing about what Luther called "the Prince of Darkness grim" is that he can use anything, good or bad, for his own ends.

III

The second reality, though, is not for a moment the decisive one. What is decisive is Luther's triumphant faith that the "Prince of Darkness grim" cannot conquer the "mighty fortress." The critical encounter between them has taken place, and the fortress has remained unconquered. Listen to how Luther puts it, and notice now that the references to the forces of evil are always surrounded with references to the fact that God has conquered evil.

> And though this world with devils filled
> Should threaten to undo us,
> We will not fear for God has willed
> His truth to triumph through us.
> The Prince of Darkness grim,
> We tremble not for him;
> His rage we can endure,
> For lo! his doom is sure,
> One little word shall fell him.

The world is filled with devils, certainly — but "we will not fear." Why will we not fear? Because "God has willed his truth to triumph through us." There *is* a "Prince of Darkness grim," but immediately after saying that, Luther goes on in the very next breath to say, "We tremble not for him," which is to say, "He doesn't finally threaten us."

Now, how can Luther be so sure of all of this? Isn't this a kind of sentimental unrealistic faith after all? On what possible grounds can Luther make these extravagantly hopeful statements? The statements we have heard come from verse three of the hymn. But already in verse two Luther has given us the reason he can speak this way. He starts out talking about the forces of evil within us, particularly our stubborn belief that we can "go it alone," that we do not need God, that we will stand on our own two feet and no help from a

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Remembrance Throws Us into Faith; Faith Exercises Us unto Godliness

THE WAY OF

THIS little book in the New Testament called the Second Epistle of Peter had the most difficult time being accepted into the New Testament. For years during the life of the early church it was accepted by some but not by all, and existed precariously on the fringe of the canon. There were good reasons for this hesitancy. For one thing there was doubt about whether Peter was actually the author. Nor was there any reliable information about where the letter was written, or to whom. In spite of all this uncertainty the church finally did accept II Peter into the New Testament. It got in on the basis of the only certain thing about it — its content. It was thoroughly apostolic in its message.

The message is directly related to two problems in the church of its day. One, the abuse of Christian freedom on the part of some church people who were living immoral lives; two, the skepticism of some church people about whether Christ would really return to establish his Kingdom or even whether the apostle's witness to his first coming could be trusted. These problems still exist. But for our day I believe the content is most valuable as it points out the way of sanctification — in plain language, the way of becoming good.

The most striking thing that confronts us as we begin to read is that as Christians we have been given the power to become good. Too often the church has lost the vision of what we can become because it has focused instead on what we are. We are reminded of the traditional Hollywood movie in which everything leads up to marriage, and when marriage arrives, the story ends — as if there were no further story to tell. So we tell all about what life is like without God and how God meets us in Jesus Christ and we are saved — and the story ends as though there were no further story to tell.

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By overstressing our helplessness as creatures in original sin, we have understressed our powers as new creatures in Christ Jesus.

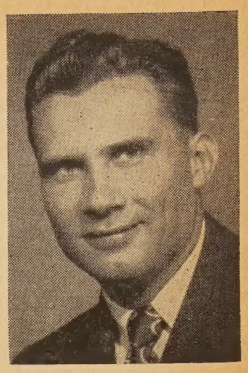
What results is an all too easy acceptance of sin. It's a convenient excuse to say, "Well, after all, we are all sinners." The man of the secular world says it all too similarly; "Well, after all, we are all human." Another one of our favorites is, "Come now, none of us is perfect."

Misunderstanding of Sin

The whole thing comes about through a misunderstanding of original sin. According to this teaching we are completely enslaved to the evil that is within us — until, but only until we come to know God in Jesus Christ. This is what Peter means when he says, "His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of him who called us to be his own glory and excellence." This word "knowledge of him" is a word which occurs again and again in this letter. In fact we might call it the key word. Through the knowledge of Christ everything changes. Knowledge here has two meanings. The first has to do with knowing about Christ, who he is and what he has done for us. The second has to do with knowing him as one would know a person. Both are necessary to each other if each is to have any real meaning. It is through this knowledge of Christ that God has granted us his "precious and very great promises, that through these we may escape from the corruption that is in the world."

As a church we have spent a great deal of energy in getting our knowledge about Christ straight — and rightly so. But in doing this we have tended to neglect the reason for getting this knowledge straight. We have an example of this in what happened to the work of St. Athanasius. He was the great leader who saved the church from a dangerous heresy back in the fourth century. This heresy, called the Arian heresy, maintained that Christ although similar to God, was still something less than God. Athanasius took up the cudgels for the full humanity and full divinity of Christ and mor

By William E. Hulme



SANCTIFICATION

than any other man was responsible for the decisions of the Council of Nicea which have come down to us in the form of the Nicean Creed in which Christ is confessed to be "Very God of Very God . . . who for us men and for our salvation . . . was made man."

But Athanasius was not only concerned about the nature of the person of Christ. He was concerned about what happened to *man* when he came to know Christ. In fact it was to defend *this* point that he fought so valiantly for the deity of Christ. But this has been largely forgotten. Athanasius' main idea was that God comes to us through Jesus Christ to restore us to an even more glorious divine image than that from which we had fallen. It is as we are knowing Christ that we reflect this image as a mirror reflects the image of one who stands before it. So it is only as Christ is God in all his fullness that we can be restored to the divine image through knowing him. In the words of Peter, it is through the knowledge of Christ that *we* "become partakers of the divine nature." This is a bold teaching! That I — little human being that I am — may partake of the goodness of the Almighty God!

It is usually about this time that we begin wondering — and worrying — about whether we can become perfect. It is lamentable that the development of the teaching of sanctification throughout the history of the church has been consistently thwarted by the entrance of this idea of perfection. Even in informal discussions about the Christian life it has a way of taking over. Actually the state of perfection has hardly any relevance to the question. None of us is in much danger of getting too close to it. It must seem ridiculous to God that human beings should argue the point. Now that modern psychology has exposed the multitude of our rationalizations and repressions it ought even to seem ridiculous to us. This entire debate about perfection is a good example of how easily we avoid the real issue in sanctification, namely, that we have been too long content with a type of living that is less than God wills for us. Here is our sin! And here is our promise. "All things that pertain to life and godliness have been given to us by his divine powers." Therefore be diligent to use this power.

Here we have the second key word of the epistle — diligence. Be diligent to attend to your sanctification. As descendants of the Reformers we are a bit squeamish about encouraging one another to become good. We are afraid that somehow we might get the idea that we are saved by our good works. Last year a prominent Protestant layman addressed a group of ministers, of whom I was one. He twitted us a bit about being behind the times in our preaching. "You fellows are forever warning us against trying to save ourselves by our good works," he said. "Frankly, I don't know of any of us who is trying very hard these days."

The Zeal of the Lord

We are justified in God's sight purely by his grace. Even the faith that we have in God's grace is a gift of God. But there is a job to be done with this faith. After one of his great descriptions of the coming Messiah the prophet Isaiah said, "The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." The zeal of the Lord of hosts *has* performed it. And we have received. Now, says Peter, respond to God's zeal with your own zeal. Use the gift! Because of all that has been made available to us through the knowledge of Christ, be diligent to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.

Our faith develops in terms of character traits. It is the foundation upon which the superstructure is built. Peter spells out for us just what this superstructure is. And this we need to hear. Let there be no fuzzy thinking about what it means to have faith in Christ. Be diligent to supplement your faith with virtue. This means integrity, honesty, moral behavior. No religiosity can ever substitute for being genuine and true. And supplement your virtue with knowledge. This word is somewhat different from our previous understanding of the word knowledge. Here it means wisdom, a sense

of values based on a Christian view of life. And supplement your wisdom with self-control. Our will power which heretofore has been both captured and corrupted by sin, is through the knowledge of Christ both released and regenerate. The flesh still lusts against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh so that you cannot do the things that you would. But the Spirit is there, and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty. There is power in Christ to discipline yourself.

And supplement your self-control with steadfastness or endurance. Our efforts in well-doing are not always immediately rewarded. The victory may come only after many defeats. How easily becoming discouraged may spoil it all. Endurance is resistance to discouragement, resistance to growing weary in well-doing, knowing that in due season we shall reap if we faint not. And supplement your endurance with godliness. Godliness means devotion to God. It means being religious in the good sense of the word — being conscious of the *presence* of God and loyal to the *will* of God in all situations. And supplement your godliness with brotherly affection. The word *brotherly* directs us to our own group, family, circle of friends, business associates, church. Some of us are more kind and courteous to strangers than we are to our own. Here is where brotherly affection comes in. Be kind, understanding and loving to the people who are your own and so preserve the unity that holds you together. And supplement your brotherly affection with love. This is *agape*-love — the love that takes us beyond our own group and moves us to embrace all mankind as our neighbors. It is the love that is patterned after the love of God who gave himself for those who had no claim on him — for us.

The Big Event

Those who neglect their sanctification are those who have forgotten the big event of history and the big event in their own history. They have forgotten that they were forgiven. So they have become shortsighted, even to the point of blindness. This is because the cross of Christ is the point on which our eyes must focus if we are to see clearly and afar off. Christianity centers in the forgiveness wrought through the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. So our own Christianity centers in this forgiveness as it becomes ours through the work of the Holy Spirit.

When we forget, it is no accident of chance. Even as forgetting is the cause of our neglect of our sanctification, so our inertia to watch and pray is the cause of our forgetting. Because forgetting is so common a human tendency, ceremonies of remembrance play a big role in the religious life. The event of the Passover in Old Testament history was anchored in the people's minds by remembering and re-enacting it at each anniversary. Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper at the occasion of the Passover anniversary and said, "This is my bod which is given for you. This is my blood of th New Covenant which is shed for you and for man for the remission of sins. This do, as oft as y drink it in *remembrance* of me."

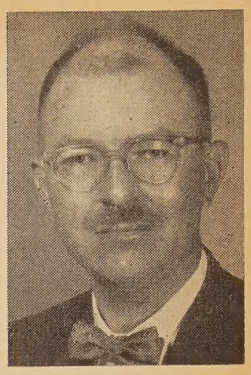
Even Baptism is not without its remembrance Luther emphasizes this in his explanation of Bap tism. In answer to the question, "What does such baptizing with water signify?" he answers, "It sig nifies that the Old Adam in us, together with al sins and evil lusts, should be drowned by daily sor row and repentance, and be put to death; and tha the new man should daily come forth and rise, t live before God in righteousness and holiness for ever." Notice the word *daily* here. Each day I no only remember my baptismal covenant, but I reliv it as I repent of my present sins and begin again t live the new life. We forget the past when it n longer has any relation to the present. Our incen tive for sanctification is lacking when our apprecia tion for forgiveness has gone stale. It is when ou consciousness of present sin is vague — when w think we stand — that we fail to take heed lest w fall. He whose vision no longer focuses on th cross can see clearly neither himself nor others.

When We Remember

When we remember, we see. But it is not pleasant sight to see ourselves. Maybe this is wh we resist remembering. But at least we see clearl and straight. Even while our sins repel us, Chris beckons to us from his cross. We are given faith to trust him. So the knowledge about Christ on hi cross leads us to know Christ in his forgiving love How easy to feel with others, now that we feel with ourselves. How readily this remembrance helps t offset our indifference and arrogance. How easy t see the real values of life when we look from th vantage point of the cross. Remembrance throw us into faith. It is to this faith that we are now t be the more zealous to supply virtue, wisdom, self control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affectio and love — to be all the more zealous to make ou calling and election sure.

Narrow is the gate and hard is the way tha leads to life. Don't underestimate the journey Make every effort to use the gift. "Exercise your self unto godliness." For if you do this, says Peter you will never fall. And then the climax — "s there will be richly provided for you an entranc into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savio Jesus Christ." This is the goal, the fulfillment Sanctification is not the qualification for this en trance into the eternal Kingdom of Christ at th end of time, but it is the *preparation*. "Lay hol on the eternal life to which you were called. Power is given us to become good. This powe is Christ himself. May we "grow in grace and i the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesu Christ."

Along with the Right to Think
Comes the Duty to Speak



In the Love of Truth

By Fred D. Ordway

I AM to present a sermon. That is not an ordinary job for me. I want to do it well. I want particularly to be sure that I give a sermon and not a lecture. To be sure that I really know what a sermon is, and what a lecture is, I've looked up both these words in Webster's unabridged dictionary. I find a sermon is a discourse, usually delivered by a clergyman — which I am not. A lecture may be a discourse delivered in a church, on an unusual occasion — which Laymen's Sunday is.

Among the definitions of a sermon is: "A serious address; a lecture on one's conduct or duty; a homily, hence an annoying harangue." And among the definitions of a lecture is: "A reprimand or formal reproof; admonition, scolding." Thus, whichever I deliver, it can be a little unpleasant. Whichever this turns out to be, it is probably the only opportunity of my lifetime to share my innermost thoughts and feelings with my dear friends in this congregation. And it is truly the opportunity for me to formulate these thoughts for myself.

The thing you may first notice in the picture before you this morning is that these laymen are not wearing the traditional robes that represent the dignity and authority of our ministers. Now, a good many of you have worn such robes on some occasion; such as the graduation ceremony of an educational institution. But to my mind your costume was always borrowed finery unless it represented the ministry or the law. The academic robes that most of you have worn were taken from the priesthood, for whom the universities were founded, when other disciplines gained recognition as professions many years ago. I believe they still belong by right to two learned professions, the ministry and the law. Both have dealings with life and death, and both are authorities for men's guidance.

The reason for this talk about professions and robes is to make clear that I speak with great humility when I say, "I'm a professional man too!" The role I see as my life's work is that of a natural philosopher: the word "scientist" would be a synonym, if it still were commonly used that way. The aspect of natural philosophy that I work with most is called chemistry; and as a chemist I too have a costume that represents my profession. It is only right that I put it on. My costume is a white lab coat. I may look different to you after putting it on. Perhaps you see in me the stock character who sells so much eyewash in the mass media of advertising. Let me tell you what I see from inside the costume.

Universal Laws

I can first look back at the past. Dimly visible several billion years ago is a significant event, which might be called the beginning of our universe, or might be just the beginning of a new phase in a larger cosmology. Since that beginning I believe that all events have followed certain universal laws. We know these laws only tentatively and incompletely, but the course of the events seems fairly clear.

Sun and earth were formed, and in the waters of earth a combination of atoms and energies occurred that had the property of interacting with certain other kinds of matter to perpetuate and duplicate itself. The duplication of this entity continued until some change in circumstances produced an entity with significantly better powers of perpetuation and duplication. By such changes the power and complexity of living beings grew.

Fairly recently a being has appeared who could use matter in far more indirect and subtle ways — man. He succeeded in forming a society which could learn the complex lessons of nature and pass them on to succeeding generations. Thus an advancing culture was possible, rather than a mere repetition in each generation of the same learning process.

When cause and effect were associated, they formed part of the technology of the time. When causes could not be seen for certain happenings, as was mostly the case, they were blamed on deities —

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manlike, and therefore unpredictable deities. Both the natural and the supernatural explanations could be supplied by the wise men of the tribe; and Moses performed this duty as a wise man of his tribe. The priesthood and the government always tended to be very close, since each could add so much to the power of the other. Rules of conduct whose reasons were lost, or weakened in persuasiveness, by the passage of time could be strengthened by speaking them in the name of deity.

But as time passed, and knowledge grew and spread, the functions of these leaders split. The civil law of government separated from the religious law of the priesthood, just as the natural philosophy of the technologists separated from the theological philosophy of the religious scholars. Sometimes mortal conflicts raged between practitioners of the different ways of thought. The Christian church can remember without much pride those times when it repressed new truth in utterly barbarous ways.

Giving Up Witchcraft

But the transfer of effects from supernatural to natural causes has continued. At each step some Christians have felt that abandoning the supernatural explanation would mean the destruction of the church of Christ. John Wesley, for instance, declared in 1768, "The giving up of witchcraft is in effect the giving up of the Bible." You all know of the battles to suppress such new ideas as those given mankind by Galileo and Darwin.

Andrew D. White, the first president of Cornell University, wrote a monumental *History of the Warfare of Science with Theology* which was published in 1895. This reprint, published sixty years later, is well worth its price today as a reminder of our heritage. The entire book shows White to have been a sincere and reverent Christian, but a liberal one. He says,

> . . . the worst enemy of Christianity could wish nothing more than that its main leaders should prove that it can not be adopted save by those who accept, as historical, statements which unbiased men throughout the world know to be mythical. The result of such a demonstration would only be more and more to make thinking people inside the Church dissemblers, and thinking people outside, scoffers.
>
> Far better is it to welcome the aid of science, in the conviction that all truth is one, and, in the light of this truth, to allow theology and science to work together in the steady evolution of religion and morality.
>
> The revelations made by the sciences which most directly deal with the history of man all converge in the truth that during the earlier stages of this evolution moral and spiritual teachings must be inclosed in myth, legend, and parable. "The Master" felt this when he gave to the poor peasants about him, and so to the world, his simple and beautiful illustrations. In making this truth clear, science will give to religion far more than it will take away, for it will throw new life and light into all sacred literature.

The spirit of science, then and now, would have us continually re-examine our customs and our institutions and our ideas and change them when there is good reason for the change.

Thus we ignore today the rules of diet and sanitation given in the book of Leviticus. But we know other rules involving subtle concepts like amino acids, vitamins and calories, which carry a real death penalty for disobedience, and which cannot be evaded by doing your cooking in secret. We have not done away with law, but have perfected it. Likewise Jesus said that he intended not to abolish the laws regarding the relations between men, but to perfect them. And his new laws also were more subtle and more difficult to obey completely.

What is the spiritual situation of a scientist in the present? I believe he must accept the truth as it is made known to him, and resolutely seek the path of righteousness in its light. I do not believe that knowing facts of nature makes anyone cold to its beauties or less reverent. The opening of flowers is caused by hydrostatic forces in the cells at the base of each petal; the growth of the stem can be controlled with indoleacetic acid; and the flowering can be controlled with gibberellic acid; but that does not make the blossoms any less beautiful.

I have an idea of the psychological value of ritual, and the need of individuals to identify themselves with a group, and to reaffirm their purposes periodically; but that does not detract in my mind from the symbolism and beauty of the communion service. Years ago I had read a little about genetics and biochemistry and physiology; but that did not make any less beautiful for me the sight of my wife nursing our newborn baby. I believe a thing of beauty is all the more beautiful to one who can appreciate its harmony, its purpose and the powers that produced it. Only when we know the full measure of creation can we know the full grandeur of the Creator.

The battle for truth is still unsettled in the modern world. Many a Christian is paralyzed by rigidities of tradition that make it impossible to discard mistakes made centuries ago. But the tragedy of our time is the inability of the Christian world to carry abroad with energy and conviction the central message of Christ, the brotherhood of man.

The penalty for failure is a threat of hell-fire that is very real indeed. Each moment of this service is very close to eternity for me, when I know we may see at any moment, through that window, the awful glare of a miniature sun erupting a mile or two to the south, to begin our last thirty seconds of life together.

What do I see for the future? I hold to the hope and faith that the spirit of Jesus will prevail, and that the awful weapons we know will not be loosed on men. If men can accept the truth, they

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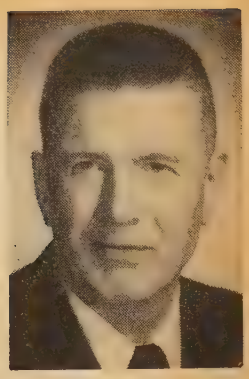
For World-Wide Communion Sunday



Words That Started A Revolution

By Everett W. Palmer

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:28.

THOSE words helped start a revolution. The world has never been the same since. That revolution, after nineteen centuries, still goes on. It is a revolution which champions the friendless and oppressed, storms the citadels of evil custom and injustice, strikes at every shackle by which men would degrade one another and deny their common humanity, and sets the captives free.

It is a revolution whose banner is the cross; whose weapons are the wisdom and courage of love; whose leader is Jesus Christ, Son of God and Savior of the World; and whose empowerment is found in the meaning of a table that reaches around the earth on this World-Wide Communion Sunday.

This is a revolution against wrong answers to one of mankind's most persistent problems: the problem of human relations. "Every human being is a problem in search of a solution . . . The problem for modern man is the problem of human relations."[1] This is the observation with which Ashley Montagu begins his recent book and upon which he bases a brilliant study of man and society.

A five-minute glance at the headlines of our daily papers is enough to prove him right. A similar glance within the Bible is enough to prove that modern man is not the first to grapple with it. Ever since Adam rubbed sleep from his eyes and found that he shared the garden with a beautiful and beguiling creature who, though altogether delightful, had a genius for getting him into trouble, mankind has struggled with the problem of human relations. From that day to this, wrong answers to this problem have been a sword man has used against himself.

No doubt the most damaging of all such wrong answers is the human tendency of any group to exalt itself and disparage all other groups, an unpleasant trait scientists term "ethnocentrism."

A British anthropologist, making a study of the causes of prejudice and its derivative animosities, tells of asking a British sailor to describe what he meant by "Dago." "Dagoes," he grandly answered, "is anything wot ain't our sort of chaps." Liston Pope, dean at Yale, himself a southerner, who reports that incident, also tells of the predicament of a private club in Florida which organized to operate a swimming pool. They wanted to draft a membership clause which would exclude both Jews and Negroes. They discovered that restriction to "Christian only" would not suffice since that would admit not a few Negroes. Restriction to "whites only" likewise was not adequate since that would permit Jews. They finally arrived at this triumph of irrationality and bigotry. "Membership shall be open only to white persons of the Christian race"![2] How silly we become when we endeavor to inflate our own sense of importance by disparaging others. Of course, the most threatening aspect of this blunder in our times is expressed by racism, the animosity and strife which presently disgraces our nation in the eyes of mankind, and on the world scale threatens to trigger the Armageddon which can blast us all from the face of the earth.

In the ancient world of Bible times, race as we think of it today apparently was not divisive in human relations. In those days men used differences as a device for exalting themselves at the expense of others: such differences as those of sex, language, religion, culture, occupation, family and tribe, and place of origin. So men found excuse to exploit women, using them as chattel property; and to condone slavery, the ultimate in man's cruelty to man. So Jews found reason to despise non-Jews, labeling them in disdain, "Goyim." So the Greeks found reason to view with disdain all

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Abelard-Schuman Limited from *On Being Human* by Ashley Montagu. Copyright 1950.

[2] Liston Pope, *The Kingdom Beyond Caste* (New York: Friendship Press, 1957). Used by permission.

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non-Greeks, terming them in disparagement, "barbarians."

Through the centuries men have used awareness of some difference as an excuse to exalt themselves and disparage, persecute and exploit, fear, hate, and kill others. From ancient times to the present, what torment unspeakable and unnecessary we have inflicted upon ourselves as we have brought wrong answers to the problem of human relations! Against this human stupidity and perversity the high meaning of World-Wide Communion Sunday stands in open revolt.

Come now to the Christian answer. We celebrate on World-Wide Communion Sunday the revolution which starts in men's minds as they learn in Jesus Christ the worth and rights of every human being as a child of God, a member of God's family with rights equal to their own. It is a revolution which starts in men's hearts as they are captured by the compulsion of: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life." It is the revolution that comes of our human hunger for fellowship and finds fulfillment in the saving power of Jesus Christ. It is the revolution represented by a cross, by broken bread and wine, by a fellowship of love which in the name of Christ and his mission for men, reaches around the world.

The Christian church began in a world climate of suspicion, hatred, and strife. In that world Christians released a new and redemptive force, insight and motivation gained from Jesus Christ. "We must stop hating and hurting one another," they pleaded. "We are all brothers and sisters, members of the same family, children of God. Before God we are of equal worth and entitled to equal rights. We should obey the rule of the family, bear one another's burdens and fulfill the law of love." "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

That started a revolution of sanity, human decency, and hope which, please God, shall be given a mighty continuance through us and all Christendom this World-Wide Communion Sunday.

Love of Truth

(Continued from page 10)

can adjust their ways to live in happiness among the treasures of the earth.

The study of ethnology should make our own society the richer. The study of psychology should help the peace and power of the individual's mind. The study of many religious traditions should refine our own. Seven young men will soon be probing into outer space. Other men will follow them to live, to work, to explore their universe and to pass on life in their turn. Thus it ever has been.

Now I take off the costume of the professional man, the counselor and prophet. I sink back into my proper obscurity, in an ordinary blue serge suit, as another one of the laymen of this church.

But you know that taking off my white coat has not made me a different man. The realities I see six days a week do not vanish when I come to this quiet place on the seventh. What I say to you today comes out of my whole life, not just one-seventh. And if my membership in this church truly is fulfilled, I make it a part of my whole life.

The priesthood of all believers is a most important principle because it implies I have the right to think for myself. But along with the right to think comes the duty to speak. Ministering to each other and to those beyond our own small list of members, we can transmit and tremendously multiply the power of our minister alone to help and guide the people. In doing so, we gain in the power to help and guide ourselves.

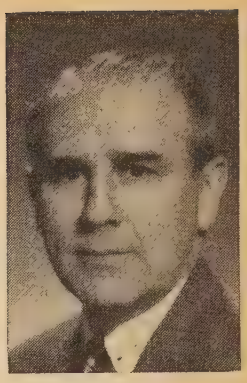
Truths Made Known

Maybe you would prefer, as I do, just to go on learning new aspects of truth for the benefit of your own power and peace of mind. But you must be ready to make the truth known to others. Some time before too long your child will need advice; the church or some community organization will need to know your convictions; a new neighbor family will ask what our church believes in; Laymen's Sunday will turn up on the calendar again and you will be given the privilege of delivering the sermon. What will you say? I think when that happens, you will express the aspects of truth that are most important to you. I, too, must make a few most important statements of truth. To our minister and his wife I must say: I thank you for coming to Bethesda to make your lives with us, and for all you have done in our service. To our minister I must say: I thank you for the spiritual enrichment that you have given me through your sermons and your teaching, and your devotion to freedom and truth.

To our musical director I must say: thank you for the many experiences of beauty you have given me through your leadership of the choir and your own great musical gifts. To the superintendents of the Sunday school I must say: thank you for caring for my children and teaching them the Christian traditions that will be their strength in later life.

To each of these people I must say: I love you for these gifts to me; your welfare is as my own. I do not say these things as this Sunday's preacher on behalf of all those here, nor as this year's moderator on behalf of the entire congregation. These are truths made known by just one layman speaking for himself. If you have a truth to make known, as I have had, will you speak it for yourself?

Doing the Truth in Particular
Can Bring Criticism – and Respect



Whom Shall We Please?

By John Paul Pack

We who are strong ought to bear the burdens that the weak make for themselves and us. We are not to please ourselves . . . Christ certainly did not please Himself. . . . If I tried to give satisfaction to human masters I would be no servant of Christ. . . . So we tell the gospel not to satisfy men but to satisfy God who tests our hearts. Romans 15:1, 3; Galatians 1:10; I Thessalonians 2:4.

WE NEED more to be reminded than informed, and it seems appropriate to me that we remind ourselves of Paul's illuminating declaration that "we are not to please ourselves." The fact is, of course, *we cannot please ourselves.*

Man's effort to please himself ends in frustration and disgust. As the psalmist said of a certain group, "God gave them their hearts' desire and sent leanness to their souls." Or, as Moffatt translates it, "The Eternal gave them what they wanted and then made them loathe it." Man's effort to please himself leads to inadequacy. Isaiah said: "His bed is too short for him, he cannot stretch out; his blanket is too narrow, it will not cover him.

Man's effort to please himself ends in loneliness. As the psalmist said, he is stuck in the mud at the bottom of a lonesome pit. Man's effort to please himself ends not only in unbrotherliness, but also in cruelty. Martin Niemoeller says that in the concentration camp he saw prisoners forced to whip their fellow prisoners or to be whipped themselves. Once they took up that whip they became in time more cruel, more bestial and more inhuman than their inhuman guards.

Man's effort to please himself ends in death.

> Three hungry travelers found a bag of gold;
> One ran into town where bread was sold.
> Thought he, I will poison the bread I buy
> And seize the gold when my comrades die.
>
> But they too thought, as backward his footsteps hied,
> We'll kill our comrade and the gold divide.
> They killed him and partaking of the bread,
> In a little while all three were dead.

How foolish is the man who hungers and thirsts to please himself for he is never satisfied. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled."

Our Lord "pleased not himself." He said, "Behold the lilies of the field; they toil not, neither do they spin." Of course not. They were not made to toil or spin. They do what they were made to do; they reach down into the mystery of the good earth to accept their life; they lift their faces to the sun; they live out their lilyhood; they fulfill their being. "Behold the Man . . . He pleased not himself." He always did that which pleased the Father. He said, "My meat is to do the will of God." He reached up for the power of God and reached out in love to the needs of man, and thus linked heaven and earth. "He pleased not Himself."

Apart from Love

We cannot please ourselves. The reason for our being is to learn and love and live by the will of the living Christ for the good of all the world. Business on our terms ends in bankruptcy. He has made us for his business and we are bound to operate in the red until we get into business for him. Apart from our love for and loyalty to the living Christ, we cannot please ourselves nor can we truly please others.

We often say, "You can't please everybody." There is nothing new about being "other-directed." To be "other-directed" was old in Aesop's day. He describes this accurately in the fable about the miller and his son who set out for the fair to sell their donkey. They met a group of laughing girls who made fun of them for walking when they might ride. So the father put the son on the donkey. Next they met a group of men who criticized the son for riding, saying that youth has no respect for age. Therefore the son got off the donkey and

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the father got on. Then they met a group of children who criticized the father as a lazy old man and expressed the judgment that the son should ride too. So the father took the son on behind. Presently they came to a bridge where a fisherman ridiculed them for cruelty to the animal. He said it would be more fitting for them to carry the little donkey than to have him carry them. They then got off and tied the donkey's legs together and, suspending him on a pole, started across the bridge whereupon the donkey kicked free, fell into the river and was drowned. The moral is that when we try to please everyone we end up by pleasing no one, least of all ourselves.

We cannot please others until we first please the Eternal. "When the ways of man please the Eternal he makes even his foes friends with him." I am sure we would all agree that Martin Luther King, the brilliant young minister of Birmingham, Alabama, pleased the Eternal in the leadership he has provided for his people. It would not be accurate to say that all of his foes have become his friends, but many of them have and surely there is no right thinking man anywhere who does not respect him. Dr. King's dramatic story is exceedingly well told in his book, *Stride Toward Freedom.*

> One night, after many threatening and annoying phone calls, I went into the kitchen and tried to forget it all. I found myself praying out loud, and I laid my life bare. I remember saying, "I'm here, taking a stand, and I've come to the point where I can't face it alone." From somewhere came the answer: "Stand for truth, stand for righteousness; God is at your side." I have not known fear since.[1]

We cannot please ourselves or others until we are ready to suffer for doing right. More than a century ago Sören Kierkegaard lamented the "Twaddle, twaddle, patter, smallness, mediocrity in the church, the playing at Christianity." He said: "For one certified hypocrite there are 100,000 twaddlers; for one certified heretic there are 100,000 nincompoops." This must have been what Bishop Bayne had in mind when he said: "I am tired of turning to non-Christians for thoughtful attitudes in racial relationships, when Christians ought to be in the forefront of this fight."

More than talk is called for. Anyone can talk about the truth in general. Christians are people who do the truth in particular. When the life of a group of Negro children in Clinton, Tennessee, was endangered because the members of the White Citizens Council incited the white children against them, a young Baptist preacher named Paul Turner got up one morning and walked to school with those children. On the way home he was accosted by a group of segregationists who beat him up. If you recall a picture of the scene in *Life* magazine you may remember an automobile was parked on the spot and it was splattered with Paul Turner's blood. The nation's sense of justice was outraged and editorials throughout the land cried out against such behavior. The result was that the federal government took action against the segregationists, the members of the Clinton School Board began to support the principal, a member of the White Citizens Council running for office was defeated four to one, the ministers of that whole area stood by Paul Turner and, what is more important, members of his own congregation supported him. All this came to pass because one man took a stand. Paul Turner had most certainly preached many good sermons on brotherhood, freedom and justice, but these principles came to life with vividness and compelling power because he was willing to suffer for doing right and shed his blood for them.

James Thurber says of Harold Ross, the late great editor of *The New Yorker,* in his fine book *The Years With Ross:*

> He made a lot of friends and lost a few. He made the right enemies and kept them all.[2]

We must remember that the times when we are most sharply criticized can be the times when we are also most worthy of respect.

[1] Martin Luther King, Jr., *Stride Toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958). Used by permission.

[2] James Thurber, *The Years With Ross* (Boston: Little Brown & Co., 1959). Used by permission.

Mighty Fortress

(Continued from page 5)

cosmic crutch for us, thank you! And he points out how this would always be defeating, save for one single fact:

> Did we in our own strength confide,
> Our striving would be losing;
> Were not the right Man on our side,
> The Man of God's own choosing;

Then, as if anticipating our question, he goes on

> Dost ask who that may be?
> Christ Jesus, it is He:
> Lord Sabaoth His name,
> From age to age the same,
> And He must win the battle.

Luther can have all of this assurance that the mighty fortress cannot be conquered, because (if we can keep to that figure of speech for a moment) the Son of the owner of the fortress went out from the bounds of its safe and protective walls, went out into the world where the challenger, "the Prince of Darkness grim," was waiting to do battle with him, *did* battle with him, absorbed all the punishment that could be visited upon him, and still emerged the victor. It was a victory at a costly price, the price of a death upon a cross, but precisely the fact that it was not a cheap victory

makes it a more real victory, and one of which we can be the surer.

Now you need not put it that way if you do not want to. But the whole Christian faith is tied up with whether or not, however you put it, this is true: that God, the mighty Fortress, is not an absentee God, off somewhere far away from us, but that in the person of Jesus Christ, he has invaded our situation, and shared our lot. He, God, has become man, for our sakes.

Our Shared Lot

And so He is not therefore just the mighty fortress. He is also, in Luther's words, "our helper." In the words of the psalmist, he is not therefore just refuge and strength, he is also "a very present *help* in trouble." And if you want to know why Christianity can say this about God, I can only invite you to look at the same place that Luther points us, to a Man dying a humiliating death, in whom faith sees how much God cares for us, that he not only shares our lot when all is well, but that he shares our lot when all is *not* well, when everything has gone to pieces.

Now it all begins to fit together. *This* is why Luther could be so sure that God was found "amid the flood of mortal ills" — because that was precisely where God in Christ was — amid the flood of hatred, scorn, torture and pain that men visited upon him. How can we know that God is found in the troubles of our lives? Because we see God in Christ in the midst of such trouble, sharing our lot right up to the very nailprints. *He* is the "right Man," who is "on our side." He is the one in whom we can trust, who took what Karl Barth has called "the way of the Son of God into the far country" in order to show us that God does not just love people abstractly, but that he loves us enough to identify himself with us where we are, to share our lot, to endure what we must endure, to conquer so that in his triumph we too may conquer. This claim about what God has done in Christ is what makes all the difference.

IV

What kind of difference does it make? That is the fourth and last aspect we must look at. What is Luther able to affirm because God is the one "who with us sideth?" What he proclaims is the end of fear, and therefore the possibility of an astonishing kind of courage. "We will not fear," he says, "for God hath willed His truth to triumph through us." Fear is banished, for God's triumph is also our triumph.

And where does this all lead? Listen to the concluding lines of the hymn and realize that Luther wrote these lines when his own life was in daily danger, that they have been sung by Christians in prison camps, by men doomed to die for their political courage, by people condemned to long illnesses. Listen to these words and see if they could be your words too:

> Let goods and kindred go,
> This mortal life also;
> The body they may kill,
> God's truth abideth still,
> His Kingdom is forever.

I can offer no more magnificent example of what might be called Christian courage. "My life," Luther is saying in effect, "is nothing, in the face of who God is. Let him use my life any way he wishes. If he wants me killed or my possessions taken away, that is all right. What matters is that 'His Kingdom is forever.' " You hear the echo of St. Paul: "If we live we live to the Lord; if we die we die to the Lord. Therefore whether we live or whether we die we are the Lord's."

The psalmist puts it the same way: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear." Not fear under what circumstances? The psalmist is pretty far-sweeping in his recognition that nothing can shake his faith. "We will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult." Those words were written before the earth "changed" at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, before the mountains "shook in the heart of the sea" during the recent hydrogen bomb tests in the Pacific Ocean, before seismographs in Alaska recorded "mountains trembling" from an underground explosion in Nevada. But these events of latter days are simply the new terms in which we are invited to share in the psalmist's old affirmation: "We will not fear."

I do not utter these words just on my own authority. I am not sure how firm my own faith would be if the earth, as the psalmist says, should melt — which is incidentally a pretty good description of what a too-powerful atomic blast would do to us. But I do affirm that this is the note of authentic Christian trust, and I ask you to test your own faith as I test mine, against it. For it is not only the great of the church but the humble as well, who have been able to make this affirmation. In the new Church of South India there is a prayer which the poor people of every village and the rich of every city say together on New Year's Day, which sums up this faith. Listen to it to make it your own as much as you can. Let us pray.

> O Lord God, Holy Father, I am no longer my own, but thine. Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt; put me to doing; put me to suffering; let me be employed for thee or laid aside for thee, exalted for thee or brought low for thee; let me be full, let me be empty; let me have all things, let me have nothing; I freely and heartily yield all things to thy pleasure and disposal.
>
> And now, O glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, thou art mine and I am thine. So be it. And the covenant which I have made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.

Even the Desert Shall Bloom

By Eugene Carson Blake

Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Isaiah 55:1.

POETRY is not easy to interpret. The fifty-fifth chapter of Isaiah is acknowledged to be great and beautiful poetry. Anyone with literary sensibility is moved by the beauty of its images and its language. But most of us, even though we like the poetry, would be put to it to interpret the sense of the chapter. What does it all mean anyway? What was the situation that called it forth? And what did it signify to the people to whom it was originally addressed? And what does it mean to us?

Poetry is different from prose. We know that; but the exact difference is hard to express. I remember studying a whole term in a college English course on this very subject and when we were finished, we weren't sure that we knew just what did make a poem a poem, much less what made a good poem a good poem. But one thing came out of that study of poetics which remains with me. Poetry is pictures, images, concreteness. Prose may be pictures too, but prose is often abstract.

Speaking in Pictures

During Britain's darkest hour of World War II Winston Churchill said: "We shall go on to the end. We shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our Island whatever the cost may be, we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender. . . ."[1] Churchill was speaking pure poetry. Put in prose, all that Churchill said was: "Wherever the enemy attacks us, we shall fight him and we won't give up." Clear enough too, but prose — no pictures, no images, no flashes in your mind, no warming of the heart. To understand poetry then, the first requirement is that we see the pictures and then, seeing them, we can if we will, in quite prosaic fashion say what the pictures mean.

Let us look at the picture behind our poetic text. It is a picture of a dry land where water is scarce and where, because of it, food and drink of all kinds were becoming more and more expensive and out of the reach of the common man. For a thousand years and more this land of Mesopotamia had been the center and cradle of culture and civilization. During all that history, Mesopotamia had been watered well by two great rivers flowing from their sources in the snowcapped mountains to the north. But of late (the last century or two) water had begun to be a problem. Too many of the hills had been deforested. The flood waters each spring carried more and more of the precious topsoil into the sea. Dry seasons came, it seemed, with increasing frequency, and hot winds blew away in powdery dust tons more of the life-giving soil. So in normal seasons the regular rains became themselves a mixed blessing. They ran off so fast that the sun-baked soil was almost as hard as the clay bricks they made for their buildings, and it soaked in but little of the needed water. But man had been ingenious. Canals and irrigation ditches had been constructed everywhere. Still, year by year, water became more scarce and therefore food more expensive, not merely in money price, but in the labor required to grow or transport it. By the time our prophet poet wrote, even the fairly thoughtless, ordinary people were aware that water had become the most precious of all commodities and that a gentle rain was the gift of life itself.

It was this caving in of a civilization due to lack of water that was happening in Babylon when our prophet spoke his message to his fellow captives from Israel who had been transported to Mesopotamia a generation or two before. Nor was it long after, as history is measured, that Babylon and the

[1] Winston Churchill, *Memoirs of the Second World War* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.). Used by permission.

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whole region between the rivers had become no longer a center of culture at all, but had turned into a sun-baked sleepy outpost of civilization. Here a few scattered remnants of people eked out their living in poverty where once great cities had stood so proudly.

Against this background of the prophet's poem, he pictured an open market place. Hawkers and farmers call to the crowds their various wares and produce. Prices are desperately high — so high that business is slack. The people just do not have the money to buy even necessities. Suddenly, above the voices of the market place, sounds a new cry:

"Ho, everyone that thirsteth" (water was being sold now that it was so scarce), "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."

You can picture the wonder and surprise and incredulity of the poor and discouraged people. "What kind of bad joke is this?" they would ask. "Free wine and milk! It can't be true." As the prophet spoke to his people gathered near him at day's end, he caught their attention with this startling picture of free water, food, wine and milk. But, of course, he made it clear immediately that his picture was not a literal one. He had no more water than they. He was as poor as they. Then they understood that he was teaching them in poetry a lesson about God — about the God of Israel whom they had almost forgotten.

"Hard Times" Religion

As always in hard times, men and women were thinking more and more about religion. Not that hard times make people religious, but hard times make people think more about religion. When materials of life become harder and harder to get, there is more and more interest in possible spiritual goods. Men ask: "What does life mean? How can I find God? What must I do to be saved?" But whether times are hard or easy, the questions are the same. And those who become really interested in religion always tend to think of spiritual goods as hard to obtain. They must be struggled for; faith and hope and peace require the same kind of effort as water and food and milk — when a depression is on.

To these thirsty and hungry people — thirsty as much for God almost as they were for water, hungry for God almost as much as they were for bread and milk — to these people the prophet was saying: "God is not hard to find. He is not far off, like the goal of a long and difficult search. God is near, near as the market place, and his word of comfort and of hope is free. There is no price at all."

God, as this prophet pictured him, is continually offering men the greatest bargains imaginable in the very things men want and need the most: Peace of spirit in a troubled world, forgiveness to men accustomed to being bargained for the final penny of their indebtedness. And this word freely coming from God will produce fruit in your life just as a rain will make flowers blossom when it gently falls on fertile soil.

> Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: And let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. . . . For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

Let us pause a moment here and note the result of this prophet's preaching. For the result was almost unbelievable. Those people heard, heeded and turned to God. They soon returned, many of them to their own land. Basing life upon their new understanding of what faith could be, they built a new culture and civilization.

If any religious message could so create new blossoming in the desert of the world, then we may well ask what this ancient poem means to us today? With but minor and unimportant variations, our need today is the same as was theirs so long ago. God is seeking us out in grace and generosity always before we think to seek for him. Faith is not won by struggle but rather by acceptance of God's ending of false and worthless struggle. God is willing to make a covenant with you and me, a bargain so generous on his part that it seems too good to be true. "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not?" You want life? You want really to find joy in life? Then turn to God and receive his free gifts. His word planted in your heart will blossom in the now barren desert of that soil.

This is the gospel, the good news of God. And when we Christian preachers try to make you see it, we have the more specifically Christian poem, more full of beauty and of power to save even than that of Israel's prophet.

> There is an ancient story — is it a parable, or something more — There is an ancient story which has a strangely moving power. First of all the scene is set in heaven, before all worlds; it changes for a while to earth, under Pontius Pilate; then we are back in heaven till the end of things. Very God of very God, for us men and our salvation, so the story runs, came down from heaven, was incarnate of the virgin, and was made man; crucified also for us, He rose again, ascended into heaven, sitteth on the right hand of the father, and shall come again with glory to judge both quick and dead.[2]

This story poem is the central theme told and retold in all Christian churches year by year of the story of the coming of God to his people in Jesus

(Continued on page 22)

[2] Canon Streeter, *Reality* (London: Macmillan, 1927).

Powers and Principalities

By William Kirkland

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. Ephesians 6:10, 11.

THIS marvelously rich letter to the Ephesians comes to a climax with a ringing call to the Christian to stand fast, to hold his ground. A vivid picture is drawn of the deadly forces which are everywhere present, ready to pounce upon man and take him captive. It is not other human beings — it is not bad or evil *men* — that threaten the Christian:

> . . . we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places.

It was *not* political tyrants that the author had in mind when he pictured this imminent threat. These words rather reflect the astrology which was so popular in the cultural environment of the New Testament. Powers, principalities, world rulers of this present darkness, were three classes of spirits, or demonic powers, who held human beings in their clutches, according to this popular view. These astrological spirits were a part of the kingdom of Satan, and were subordinate to the will of Satan himself.

In the popular mind, these spirits were understood to be lethal in their power! They were invisible — you could not spot them. But once a person fell under the sway of these forces, he had "had it." The writer of Ephesians alludes more than once to the hopeless resignation which would descend upon the pagan devotees of this astrological cult. These superstitions continued to influence the minds of those converted to Christianity. The tug of the pagan environment was nowhere more enticing than at this point.

Something else disturbs the writer of Ephesians, too. The best that paganism could do was to urge men to yield to these powers like good soldiers of fate, "accepting as unalterable the destiny which was written in the stars," as one commentator puts it.

Yet how radically different was the summons to the Christian!

> Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God . . . that you may be able to withstand in the evil day [or in the day of your unlucky star], and having done all, to stand

Far from "rolling over and playing dead" in the face of these threats, the liberated Christians were called to take up spiritual arms and stand their ground. They were not helpless puppets caught in the byplay of forces beyond their control. Christ's victory was their victory, and in his gospel they had all the resources they needed to protect themselves against the crafty enemy.

It is remarkable how little "demythologizing" and "remythologizing" is required to sense the pressing pertinence of this passage for us today. Of course it is not astrology and its naive faith in astral spirits that holds our minds in bondage in this scientific age. It is not astrological fatalism that overwhelms us, making us feel that we are held helplessly in the clutch of alien powers. Yet we do have an uncanny feeling that the writer of Ephesians was addressing his words to us in the mid-twentieth century rather than to the Christians at Ephesus in the primitive church. For we have our modern parallels to the ancient beliefs in demonic spirits and astrological fatalism.

The massive forces of history with which we contend, and the subtle pressures of our society we feel today, are *invisible* in many respects — difficult to single out, harder to pin down! These forces and pressures are "out there" in the flow of historical events, in the atmosphere, in the "climate of opinion," in the context of all our thinking. Yet these forces are also "inside us," deep within our

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psyches, where we recognize them chiefly by what they produce in us—anxiety, acquiescence, apathy.

Reinhold Niebuhr has impressionistically pictured our present situation here in America as a "gadget-filled paradise suspended in a hell of international insecurity."[1] Reflect for just a moment on this paradoxical picture, suggesting as it does a material heaven in the closest juxtaposition with a moral hell. Compare the characteristic mood generated by the "style of life" inside our American culture — "our gadget-filled paradise" — with the characteristic mood generated by our inescapable involvement externally in the power struggles of the world — "the hell of international insecurity."

We might expect that these sharply contrasting aspects of our present situation would provoke equally contrasting moods. Actually these two sides of our American experience today tend to create disturbingly compatible moods that reinforce each other in a very unhealthy way.

Futility

The news analyst, Edward P. Morgan, reported on one of his broadcasts not long ago that he had been searching for the one word that best seemed to describe the mood of our present time. The word "futility" came closer than any other he could think of. An alarming facet of this mood is the sharpness and clarity with which it is reflected in the younger generation. "Gravely fatalistic" was one of the characteristic attitudes reported in *Time* magazine's impressionistic survey of today's youth. This attitude is distinctively prominent on the college campus. A college student told me recently that the International Relations Club on her campus had voted itself out of existence because of lack of interest.

Listen to this description of our contemporary life, written not by an alarmist preacher or a killjoy theologian, but by a sober social scientist:

> The white-collar people slipped quietly into modern society. . . . Whatever future they have will not be of their own making. . . . The twentieth-century white-collar man is always somebody's man, the corporation's, the government's, the army's. . . . He is more often pitiful than tragic, as he is seen collectively, fighting impersonal inflation, living out in slow misery his yearning for the quick American climb. He is pushed by forces beyond his control, pulled into movements he does not understand; . . . The white-collar man is . . . the small creature who is acted upon, but who does not act, who works along unnoticed in somebody's office or store, never talking loud, never talking back, never taking a stand . . . always visible but rarely seen. . . . "share-croppers in the dust-bowl of business."[2]

Thus, while we boast of our spiraling standard of living, we cannot ignore the surprisingly high toll it is exacting from us. In creating an economy of abundance and leisure we have also set in motion social forces inclining us towards, not the *misuse* of our freedom so much as the *disuse* of our freedom — towards acquiescence and apathy.

Now, to put both of these dimensions of our contemporary American experience together is to begin to perceive the depth and breadth of the "powers and principalities" against which we must contend today. Externally, the "hell of international insecurity" evokes within us a feeling of futility and impotence. This in turn makes us all the more vulnerable, internally, to our mass culture, our "gadget-filled paradise," with its enthrallments of self-indulgence, trivia, escapism. Both of these dimensions of our national existence conspire to accentuate the peculiar spiritual problem of mid-twentieth century man: the deadening sense of non-involvement in the urgent issues of human destiny.

In this kind of cultural situation, the words of Ephesians peal forth with heightened power, in all their realism and yet in all their *restraint,* too. They don't promise too much, nor do they ask too much. But what these words do affirm is of life and death seriousness in our struggle to hold on to our essential humanity and to live as responsible Christians: It is the living God who gives us the power and the strength to stand! The real issue in our present situation is the struggle "to stay alive" as moral and spiritual beings — the struggle to stay alive as *men.* The battle is not to give in, not to sit down or lie down, not to "throw in the towel," not to become anesthetized by the drugs of indifference. Only the power of the living God can keep us *alive* and *involved.*

Centers of Resistance

Being shielded by the armor of the gospel, being strengthened by Christ's might in the inner man, we shall be able to become personal centers of resistance to the relentless pressures and forces that beat in upon us. We shall discover that there are some things we can do, some ways in which we can become engaged in responsible and pertinent action in our present situation, so that our posture will look more like that of an involved Christian than a resigned pagan. The precise form of this action will vary, of course, depending upon where we are and upon our own interpretation of what is going on in the world. But two possibilities in particular stand out, one having to do with the massive historical forces that engage us outside our national boundaries. and the other having to do with the subtle cultural pressures that impinge upon us with our American society.

In the arena of international power politics, one way we can become relevantly involved is to gain for ourselves a more accurate, realistic appraisal of communism, that rival "way of life" which shall confront and engage us in the West for as far into the future as we can see. This means the

[1] Reinhold Niebuhr, *Pious and Secular America* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958). Used by permission.

[2] C. Wright Mills, *White Collar* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956). Used by permission.

effort to understand communism in the full light of our faith in God as creator, as governor, and as redeemer. The profoundest interpreters of biblical faith in our own time see in communism in part at least, the judgment of God upon the Christian church and the western civilization so closely related to the Christian church. These prophetic Christian witnesses contend in various ways that the evils of capitalism in its earliest form and the unfulfilled duties of Christians combined to give communism its big chance in history.

Undiscussible Topic

Yet we wonder how many Christian preachers help their people understand communism from this kind of prophetic stance? How many of our active laity view communism through the bifocal lenses of biblical faith? Merrimon Cuninggim has recently suggested that to most of us here in America communism has come to mean whatever we disagree with the most. He identifies it as "the undiscussible topic" in our American society. And this right at the very time when we need most desperately to understand that the communist challenge is far greater than our stereotyped image of it has ever recognized. The challenge is coming not simply in the one area of military might and armaments alone. It is a multi-dimensional, many-faceted challenge, including technology, productive power, and cutting across the broad field of social, educational, and cultural achievements.

This suggests something of the subtlety and seriousness of our *spiritual* as well as our *political* problem: to resist the tyrannical elements in communism, but to see in its power a very present occasion for our own judgment and repentance before the King of Kings. Our very difficult task is to see the relative merits of the "American way of life" over the so-called communist way, but to stop short of identifying the American Way with the Christian Way. To rise to these urgent needs of our nation will require all the moral discernment and discrimination we Christians can muster. But this is the great task and opportunity of the church as it relates itself to the power politics on the international scene.

Another course of action by which we Christians can come alive and become involved has to do with the subtle pressures operating within the sphere of our American culture. We have gone a long way towards achieving not only a greater production of the necessities of life here in America — and in achieving a greater amount of leisure. We have also achieved a more equitable distribution of the goods we are producing, and of the leisure time resulting, among a wider segment of our total population. But now we must alert our people to the more disconcerting fact that, in so doing, we have created newer, more subtle spiritual problems with which we all must wrestle: the problems of how we are to relate ourselves to al this wizardry of man's own creativity, to the en thralling luxuries of our gadget-filled paradise.

No blanket condemnation of our productiv capacity is called for. No lazy effort of ours t squeeze all these new dilemmas into the old over worked category of "materialism" will come clos to the heart of the problem. Part of our difficult is in treating luxuries as necessities, and necessitie as luxuries. Our task is not to condemn the gad gets as being evil in themselves, but to discover ou right relation to these things, in the full contex of our relation to all our neighbors, far and near

To help our fellow Christians cultivate this kind of new moral insight, to prepare them to engage in the spiritual warfare on the "battlefield" o abundance and opulence in the "New America": this will demand all the creativity, all the imagination that the Re-Creative Word can inspire within us.

> To serve the *present* age, our calling to fulfill,
> O, may it all our powers engage, to do our Master's will

Only free Christian men, only creative Christian men, only reflective Christian men will be able to stand against the wiles of our contemporary cultural powers and principalities. "Therefore take the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."

Brotherhood Prayer

O THOU who hast been worshiped under many names and rites through the centuries, we recognize thee as the Father of all nations and races. We thank thee for the prophets who have taught us that we should dwell together in brotherhood. Forgive us for our failures to live according to their ideals, for ignorance of other religions that causes us to look upon them with superiority or scorn, for the prejudice that impels us to dislike those who differ from us, for the antipathies of creed that divide us.

As we reflect upon the years that have passed, shame and sorrow overcome us. The strife and destruction that have resulted because of our unwillingness to understand thy universal truths rise up to rebuke us. Grant us power to join hearts and hands, disregarding barriers of class, creed and color, and to labor together to overcome ignorance, disease, poverty, prejudice and violence. Help us to cease wrangling over trivialities and emphasizing divergencies, when we should be one with comrades of good will in all lands, working for human freedom and co-operation. Amen. — *Robert M. Bartlett, First Congregational Church, Shrewsbury, Massachusetts.*

The Mask of Humility

By Martin E. Marty

Now he told a parable to those who were invited, when he marked how they chose the places of honor, saying to them, "When you are invited by any one to a marriage feast, do not sit down in a place of honor, lest a more eminent man than you be invited by him; and he who invited you both will come and say to you, 'Give place to this man,' and then you will begin with shame to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that when your host comes he may say to you, 'Friend, go up higher'; then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at table with you. For every one who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." Luke 14:7-11.

PARABLES are simply stories. But life is complex, and parables point to this complexity. Interpreting parables is difficult; in the midst of many mistakes I have come across a principle of interpretation which I am ready to present seriously to professional biblical scholars. It is this: Never rest content with a solution to a parabolic riddle until you have first settled with at least two attractive premature solutions. Never feel confident that you are at dead center until you have been wooed by some eccentric attractions. Seldom does this principle speak so directly as it does with the parable of Jesus which speaks to us this week. On the surface all is simple. In the closing cycle of the church year, the Gospels of the ancient church's sequence point to aspects of Christian character. This one happens to deal with humility, following in the steps of the Humble One, who came not to be ministered unto but to minister. So far so good. All is simple, so long as we read it as a lesson in etiquette for the Kingdom of God — it is, then, so easily solved and so easily dismissed.

And as a harmless bit of Amy Vanderbiltian advice it is most attractive. Look at the story on the face of things. It discusses protocol; Jesus sets the instance at a marriage feast — a forbiddingly formal affair. His rough and tumble disciples may have needed a lesson or two: finesse, to the eyes of a country boy in a tuxedo, may still be exposed as clodhoppery by his sophisticated cousin. Chicago rehearsed protocol for weeks to greet Queen Elizabeth II this summer. We did everything *just right*. The British papers thanked our city for its rousing, roustabout greeting, which in Midwestern fashion — *dispensed with all protocol*. So practice how to sit, where to sit, so that you will not be exposed at the heavenly banquet — is this the point of Jesus' teaching?

To what does this head start tempt us? Viewed as a chapter in a Gospel of Etiquette it is a charter for self-advancement and self-enhancement. Evidently status-seeking did not have to await a 20th century prophet like Vance Packard; it existed long ago. Location of reclining seats at ancient banquets was a precise art. I too own commentaries, and they can tell you which of three people on a couch held highest rank. And, in terms of the parable, which of the three if he presumed was most likely to be removed to the edge where the stale cigarette butts stagnated the dust-plush corners of the couch. No, says Jesus, don't seek a high place, or you will be nudged unceremoniously to the bottom and experience public shame. So what do we do?

Misinterpretation No. 1: Calculate

This is the gambit of the religious man, who is shrewd enough to be humble so that he can be proud of his humility and thus be advanced. He is not a new type. They used to call them, as they paraded past Jesus, Pharisees. Isn't this what today we would call in, say, Bonhoeffer's terms, the *religious* man? Inwardness, a pious stance, a publicly plaguing conscience, a blue-veined-hand inhumanity, a dilettante personality type ("Aren't you *just* fascinated by religion?"), are the prerequisites. God cannot help but notice such a humble man — all men do. Advance! Go to the top!

No, says the Christian faith; this denies the na-

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ture of Christian humility which is in its most profound instincts opposed to calculation. Aspiration of this sort is dishonest. The Prodigal Son dare not kneel and then look over his father's shoulder to see how the roasting of the fatted calf is coming along. You cannot sneak up on God.

Misinterpretation No. 2: Play It Safe

This is the gambit of the American who is shrewd enough not to be involved in the extremes of the parable. Maybe he is a newer type, because the parable makes no direct provision for him. In what I trust is still current parlance, he plays it cool; he is the relaxed pragmatist, who knows what is useful in the parable. He has a head on his shoulders; he can size things up. Why take the risk of heading for the head table and losing all? He knows there are seats at mid-distance where there is still status and prestige and comfort; not in the spotlight but also not behind the posts and off behind the cigar smoke. Here is a typical religious solution for our day: avoid profound commitment and risk. Know personhood by subtraction; assert the semipositive through the seminegative. No, says Jesus, authentic personhood and authentic humility are the requisites.

Interpretation

There may be others, here is mine. The parable has nothing to do with etiquette. It does not talk about masks but about persons; it does not say how to act so much as it says what to be. God will dispose as he will, no matter what personality type he is forced to work with. Because he is what he is, the man of humility takes the lowest seat. Calculator No. 1 immediately spots the risk: suppose he is not elevated — what good did his humility do him? Calculator No. 2 can underscore it: you should have played it safe. God didn't even notice him — and now the party's over!

All these calculations and miscalculations are rendered unnecessary and meaningless if we interpret this not as etiquette but in the context of most of Jesus' parables. Then we see it with its sharp ring of urgency; it is told, as it were, in a hurry. Theologians would say it has an eschatological ring; it sounds as if the end of things is at the end of the parable! Viewed in this light, what is the message? Jesus is dropping a hint not how we must act but what we must be at the Heavenly Banquet, where newness, newness of the New Creation breaks in upon our routinized and patternized lives. He is concerned not with the presentation of our selves through masks but with the nakedness of our inadequacy and the reduction after our pride is annihilated through his law. Pride defeats its own ends; it confronts and encounters others' pride. Humility has its own reward; it is part of the life hid with Christ in God.

Such humility is born of the faith which trusts in God who is Father of Jesus Christ and whi responds by taking life in stride. Jesus walked th way, and he found a place. On a gallows. "H humbled Himself, even to death on a cross." Ame

P.S. There is a sequel. There had been no calc lation, no self-seeking. "Wherefore God has high exalted Him . . ." Paul, an early commentato adds the ethical note: "Let this mind be in yo which was also in Christ Jesus." Let it; and, agai Amen.

Even the Desert

(Continued from page 17)

Christ. But it too we must remember is a poem, mighty work of God and we must see its image with the Spirit's eyes and then it will find its plac and blossom in barren lives.

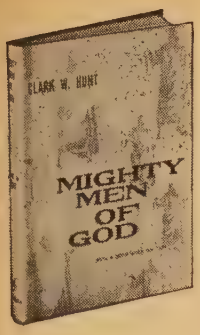
Part of the wonder of it is that when we fin this Christian faith, we find that we have no really turned our backs upon the hard and hars realities of daily life, the market place with hig prices, and little water for irrigation and no rai fall for the fields. No, we find that the end of th story is not merely some bodiless "spiritual" exi tence that Christ and his gospel brings. Rather w look forward to a rescued and redeemed earth a well.

"The mountains and the hills shall break fort before you into singing, and all the trees of the fiel shall clap their hands." That's poetry all right – an image of a fertile earth. The prophet continue "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tre and instead of the brier shall come up the myrt tree." That is the climactic end of the poem, a ver accurate description of what must grow upon th hills — fir trees instead of cactus — if the earth to produce abundance and if there is to be pro perity and peace among men.

There are two kinds of people to whom th news is directed particularly: first are those wh find religion a hard effort, like all the rest of lif a struggle, an unequal competition, a strain. T you once more comes the gospel promise, God near, his gifts are free. Receive them.

And secondly are those of you who hardly kno you want God at all, so busy are you in searchin for bread that does not satisfy, and the other thing and trinkets with which men try to fill their day and satisfy their restless hearts. You too are athirs for God — though you know it not. To you the comes the invitation framed in the ancient prop et's words:

"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to th waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, bu and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk withou money and without price."



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Catch Us the Little Foxes

By Roy Pearson

I LIKE those words from the Song of Solomon: "Catch us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vineyards. . . ." I don't suppose that anybody really knows what they mean in their context, but they have so many fascinating meanings in areas of which the ancient writer never even dreamed.

Take the ministry, for example. How many little foxes there are that spoil the vineyards! Not huge beasts like lions or bears. Not vast swarms of creatures like locusts or grasshoppers. Not cataclysmic *acts of God* like whirlwinds or earthquakes. They could destroy the vineyards too. But think now only about the foxes, the *little* foxes, the sleek and crafty animals that steal in one by one and, often looking wholly harmless, work havoc in the vineyards of the ministry.

Intellectual Pursuits

One of them is the idea that the intellectual pursuits are actually somewhat alien to the calling of the Christian pastor. A friend of mine who is a layman put the attitude pretty well the other night. "We don't need scholars in our churches," he said. "We need good administrators and good pastors. Most of us don't care whether a man knows any theology or philosophy; we just want him to be able to run the church and call on the people." That is a fairly common point of view in the churches, and even in the ministry itself. "What difference does it make whether I know anything about the modern theologians or not?" a man will ask. "I'm not a brain: I'm a minister!" Or, "So I can't understand church history. Why all the excitement? I've got bigger things to think about than that. After all, did Jesus get a Fulbright? Was Peter a Phi Beta Kappa? Can you think of James as a magna cum laude?"

But how that little fox can destroy our vineyards! It takes the ministry out of the context of other vocations and assumes that while it is absolutely necessary for the physicist to know the truth about atoms, it is not at all essential for the minister to know the truth about God. It makes the mistake of believing that while all other knowledge comes only through blood, sweat and tears, religious knowledge is acquired simply by a barked command or a pushed button. It forgets that if the soul needs nurture, so does the brain and that if the heart requires correction, so does the mind. Mentally lazy, a man grows totally lazy, and ten years after his graduation from seminary he suddenly discovers that the friendly little dog which he welcomed to his farm and zealously fed for a decade is really the fox which has wiped out his vineyard.

Or take another little fox — the idea that the intellectual pursuits are the *only* pursuits appropriate to men of ministerial stature. You know how it goes. "Pastoral calling? That's for the birds. Church administration? A filthy business. Community affairs? A waste of time. Carpenters and plumbers, mechanics and secretaries? They bore me!"

Surely that fox destroys as many vineyards as the other. It leaves a man up in his study while his church burns down around him. It isolates him from the church's only excuse for existence — men and women, people, the sons and daughters of God whom God loved enough to endure incarnation. Someone has said that the best substitute for experience is being sixteen, and when a man knows nothing but books, he leaves a theological school but little more capable of leading a church in the service of God than he was when he entered it. When a church calls a pastor, it frequently calls him as "minister and *teacher*," but it is one of the principal tragedies of theological education that after seven or eight years of college and seminary the teacher so frequently still sorely needs to be taught. He is a lopsided individual — heavy on untested theories and uninterpreted information but desperately light on common sense, practical knowledge, emotional stability and spiritual maturity. In the things that matter mos to the Kingdom of God there is man a housewife who is better equipped fo the leadership of his church than h is himself, and in the helpless wake fulness of some lonely midnight h hears a quiet voice which reminds hir how much of his life has been wrongl directed. He has loved himself mor than his neighbor. He has prize things or ideas above people. He ha used his books not as a weapon bu only as a refuge. The little fox o pedantry has stolen his grapes, an the vines in his vineyard are bare.

Special Privilege

And then take one more little fox — the idea that the ministry, being calling of special holiness, is also vocation which justifies the deman for unusual privilege. You know ho that goes too. It always makes m think of the prominent, city ministe who was telling some of us storie at a church supper. "You ought t have seen what happened to me th afternoon," he said with obvious relish "I was driving down Main Street abou fifty miles an hour. Not going an where in particular, just whizzin along for the fun of it. All of a sudde this cop blew his whistle and stoppe me. He started to give me a goo dressing down, but I just turned m head toward him and I said, 'Look buddy, do you know who I am? I'm the minister at St. John's Church Well, you ought to have seen his face He got red as a beet, apologized a over the place, and bowed me on m way."

Bills? Other people ought to pa them when due, of course. But every body knows the minister doesn't hav to worry about them. Letters? The ought to be answered promptly. Ex cept by the minister; he is too bus to be bothered with them. Appea ance? Well, cleanliness is next to god liness, isn't it? Except in the ministe When he hasn't shaved, everyone supposed to assume that he has bee up all night with a dying parishione and when his shirt is dirty, the poo man probably has not had the tim to change it.

There is many a ministerial vineyar which has been destroyed because

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ROY PEARSON, *an editorial associate of The Pulpit, has been dean of Andover Newton Theological School since 1954. He is well-known as a preacher and author, and is also active on several committees and boards of the Congregational Christian Churches.*

man got so preoccupied with trying to walk the second mile that he forgot all about the first. Justice is an Old Testament virtue, but any minister is headed for trouble who thinks that he can skip it in his headlong dash for the virtue of love in the New Testament. Honesty probably belongs more to the first mile than to the second, but without the foundation of honesty, how can you have the superstructure of self-sacrifice? A church has the right to expect that its minister will be more scrupulous than other men, not less — more courteous, more thoughtful, more considerate of local prejudices in matters of speech, dress and general manners. If Jesus came not to be ministered unto but to minister, is the disciple above his master or the servant above his lord, and demanding more privileges than his fellows, does the minister have any legitimate reason for surprise when he discovers in the end that he has sold his birthright for a mess of pottage whose aftertaste is shame and disillusionment?

The idea that the intellectual pursuits are alien to the ministry, the idea that the intellectual pursuits are the *only* pursuits, the idea that ministers deserve special privileges — these are only a few of the foxes, and all of them are *little* foxes. But when a vineyard is destroyed, does it make very much difference to the vineyard whether the fox was a big one or a little one?

Pulpit Calendar

Sept. 27-Oct. 4 — Christian Education Week.
Oct. 4 — World-Wide Communion.
Oct. 11 — Men and Missions Day.
Oct. 11-18 — Churchmen's Week.
Oct. 18 — Laymen's Sunday.
Oct. 25 — World Order Sunday.
Oct. 31 — Reformation Day.
Nov. 1 — All Saint's Day.
Nov. 2 — All Soul's Day.
Nov. 6 — World Community Day.
Nov. 8 — Stewardship Day.
Nov. 15 — 26th Sunday after Pentecost.
Nov. 22 — Thanksgiving Sunday.
Nov. 26 — Thanksgiving Day.
Nov. 29 — 1st Sunday in Advent.
Dec. 6 — 2nd Sunday in Advent.
Dec. 13 — 3rd Sunday in Advent. Universal Bible Sunday.
Dec. 20 — 4th Sunday in Advent.
Dec. 24 — Christmas Eve.
Dec. 25 — Christmas.
Dec. 27 — Sunday after Christmas.
Dec. 31 — New Year's Eve.

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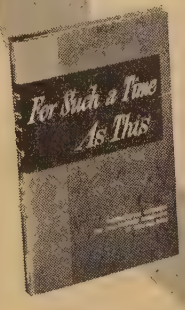

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Book Reviews

THE WITNESS OF MATTHEW AND MARK TO CHRIST. *By Ned B. Stonehouse. Eerdmans. $3.00.*

MORE than twenty years ago Ned B. Stonehouse succeeded J. Gresham Machen as professor of New Testament at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. Both men have represented the conservative appreciation of the New Testament in an admirable fashion. This present volume shows careful and solid exegesis, a wide acquaintance with scholarship, an open mind toward biblical problems, a style of writing which has a devotional touch coupled with rugged correlation of facts and interpretations, and some fresh conclusions. If this is called conservative scholarship, let us call it conservative scholarship at its best.

Professor Stonehouse views the Liberals as seeing the Gospel of Mark primarily based upon historical reminiscences, including the preaching of Peter; while he sees the Radicals as discerning Mark construed from a theological construction rather than from history. Both of these schools miss the real approach to the Gospel of Mark, Stonehouse says, for the evangelist is primarily attempting to show Jesus Christ as a supernatural person, the Son of God, who through divine action has brought salvation of mankind; the gospel is thus "glad tidings *concerning* Jesus Christ rather than glad tidings *which he proclaimed.*" Thus Mark writes neither as a biographer nor a historian, but as a believer, one who presents the glad tidings concerning Jesus Christ, the son of God. It is as a transcendent Messiah that Jesus Christ marches from his baptism in the Jordan river finally to the cross at Jerusalem.

Nor is Matthew a secular biographer: "His purpose is to depict Jesus as the messianic king, the Son of David, whose history fulfills the revelation of the Old Testament." This Old Testament fulfillment proved a stumbling block to the Jewish leaders for they did not like Jesus' conception of his ministry nor the way he discharged it. In the Gospel of Matthew Christ looks forward to the establishment of the Church; such a gospel thus "reflects the faith of the Church and was suited to meet the needs of the Church." The first evangelist, however, has not lost his abil to distinguish between the history Christ and the history of the Christi Church. Such a distinction "wou have undermined the very foundati of the Christian faith and made t evangelist a herald of falsehood."

As a person reads this book wi deep appreciation, there are certa critical problems which arise: (1) D Stonehouse believes that Mark i tended to end his gospel with t statement "for they were afraid Such a statement, the author conten leaves the reader with a sense of aw which is Mark's intention. Furthe more Mark is more concerned wi Jesus' passion than with his resurre tion. Mark is a Gospel which leav an impression of awe regarding th Son of God, so why should not t Gospel end as it does? Some of find greater favor in concluding th Matthew's resurrection appearances Galilee fairly well represent the Mar an resurrection story, upon which Ma thew based his details. (2) In rega to the view that Matthew's not repo ing the Jerusalem resurrection even is an indication that Matthew ha no knowledge of such events, D

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Stonehouse says: "Such apodictic judgments are altogether premature and unscientific." Such an evaluation from Stonehouse seems a rather prejudiced and "unscientific" statement for the author to make, and is not quite consonant with the careful scholarship usually shown in this volume. (3) The volume seems to lack a realistic tying of the Gospel of Mark into the situation at Rome to which the second gospel was sent, and of the Gospel of Matthew into the vital historical situation at Antioch where in the first gospel there existed a vying of the Church with the synagog. (4) In dealing with the relationship of Jesus' message to the apocalyptic hope, the author says: "Most modern interpreters have not given the apocalyptic, or eschatological, character of this message its comprehensive scope." Unless this reviewer is wrong, it seems to him that the relationship of Jesus' message to the eschatological situation has been one of *the basic problems* of contemporary New Testament scholars, from Albert Schweitzer and his *consistent eschatology* to C. H. Dodd and his *realized scholarship*, with a virile attempt upon the part of the scholars to determine how much of the eschatology stems directly to Jesus and how much belongs to the interpretation of the Christian community!

But, in spite of the questions herein raised, this is an excellent volume which ought to have solid and wide reading. It represents in an admirable way biblical erudition harnessed to an intelligent conservatism. — *Thomas S. Kepler, Graduate School of Theology, Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio.*

MINISTRY AND PRIESTHOOD, CHRIST'S AND OURS. *By T. W. Manson. John Knox. $1.50.*

WE HAVE THIS MINISTRY. *By Robert N. Rodenmayer. Harper. $2.50.*

THE CHRISTIAN SHEPHERD. *By Seward Hiltner. Abingdon. $3.00.*

THE MINISTRY OF PREACHING. *By Roy Pearson. Harper. $2.25.*

STEWARDS OF GRACE. *By Donald Coggan. Morehouse-Gorham. $2.75.*

THE MINISTERS in our readership will be able to take their pick of any of these and be carried in different directions. All are short contributions to the ongoing quest for lifting today's ministry above minor prophecy. Manson's two lectures are profound variations on the theme of sacrifice: read them and be moved to taking the form of the servant. Rodenmayer's five chapters on five dimensions of ministry are disarmingly folksy; each is backed by the fortunate combination of experience and reflection. Theology is granted its due. Read it and seek breadth. There are no surprises, but there is much good sense in Hiltner's case-book of aspects of pastoral care. Read it and compare. Pearson's work appears frequently on our pages. The author quotes Yeats on his (Yeats') earlier years: "My thoughts were a great excitement, but when I tried to do anything with them, it was like trying to pack a balloon into a shed in a high wind." Pearson keeps the excitement but succeeds in compressing. Bishop Coggan's book is in many respects the most practical of all, but it may be less interesting to American readers than the others because it seems to ask and answer questions which are not foremost in today's discussion of ministerial discontents.

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a gospel of individual salvation. Social redemption, if considered at all, comes by way of sending Christian individuals into business, labor, politics, etc. (3) Most Lutheran preachers are gun-shy of good works. There is far more emphasis upon justification than upon sanctification. (4) There is a certain "timeless" quality to Lutheran preaching. A good many Lutheran sermons could have been preached word for word in the first, 16th, or 20th centuries.

In a sense all three of these volumes display these characteristics. Each of these preachers is convinced that man's hope on earth and for heaven depends upon Christ's deed on the cross. All of them preach for an individual decision and display very little concern with the problems of society (except, perhaps, as these problems affect the salvation of the individual). They make it painfully clear (especially Riess and Hoffmann) that no one is saved by his good works. (Professor Paul Holmer of the University of Minnesota says he gets weary of listening to Lutheran preachers warning their congregations of the dangero practice of trying to work their w into heaven. Then as he looks arou the parish, he says, he doesn't s anyone that is even trying!)

One gets the feeling that for all t passion for sound doctrine in Luth an circles, there is an acute lack relevance to much of our preachin We are hanging doctrinal hats a coats in mid-air because too often v have not tried to discover the meanin ful pegs of modern life.

Youngdahl may be the most easi understood of the three, but too oft at the expense of trivializing the g pel. Frequently he sounds like No man Vincent Peale with liturgy. Rie and Hoffmann have some solid thin to say, but one wishes they would di cover more exciting ways of sayi them. — *Robert M. Herhold, St. John Lutheran Church, Mound, Minneso*

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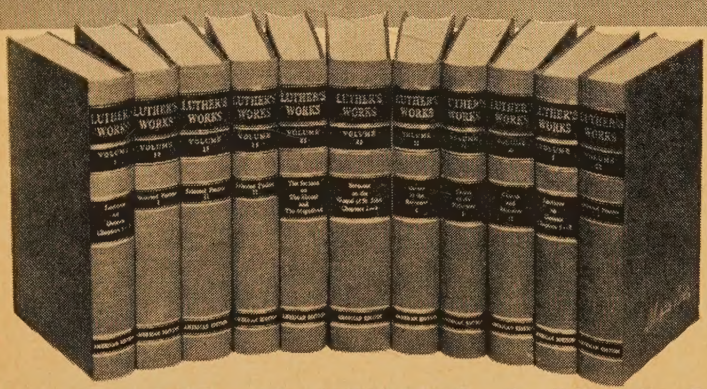

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THE REALITY OF FAITH: *The Problem of Subjectivism in Theology. By Friedrich Gogarten, translated by Carl Michalson and others. Westminster. $3.95.*

WHEN a thinker is as comple and often unclear as Friedric Gogarten is, the attempt to "translat by committee" is not the best solutio Numerous reviews have called atte tion to the shortcomings of this lite ary attempt. Not having read th original I can only assume that th partly explains the difficulty the rea er may experience with the argumen Yet it cannot be lightly dismissed o this ground. Gogarten has written o a subject that is so often neglecte yet which is near the heart of th everyday concerns of the everyda Christian. In America, H. Richar Niebuhr has addressed himself to th question of subjectivism and relativis in theology, and this nation's patter of pluralism forces it upon Christia who see the Christian claim in comp tition with others. Despite his appr ciation of Christian freedom, h approach to the subjectivist traditio Gogarten neither sees nor provides charter for irresponsibility. As a ma ter of fact, responsibility for "th world" preoccupies him as much it did Dietrich Bonhoeffer or do anyone who believes that the wor has come of age. The Christian ge his signals from faith; but faith nee not mean that the Christian does n know something. Faith fulfills its mo proper task — that of safeguardi man's freedom for God — when holds open the autonomous freedo of the world and of life in it. Gogarte has provided a serious call for r sponsibility in a time when many the old props have been pulled awa

OLD TESTAMENT THEOLOGY. *By Ludwig Koehler, translated by A. S. Todd. Westminster. $4.50.*

ORIGINALLY published in G many a quarter of a century a this translation was made availab in the United States last autum

)ld Testament scholars are long fa-iiliar with it. With Edmond Jacob's)ook of the same title offered by Har-)er in the same year, this amounts o a feast. We have given it a work-)ut on the subject of "man" and ound it most useful for anthropologi-al work that is not limited to biblical nterest. The format commends it:)rief chapters make it useful to many)f us who cannot sustain lengthy study)f pages heavily salted with Scripture eference and Hebrew phrases, all pre-ented in compressed style. Not a good primer, but excellent when one is ready to throw the crutches away for a trial hobble.

PULPIT POST

(Continued from page 2)

He would have to love the church, really suffering that it has so little respect for its leadership; and he would have to love his Lord and determine to serve him, even if the ministry were denied him.

Do we have such a ministry today? If not, maybe they deserve to be underpaid!

H. Vardis Schwager
Davenport
North Dakota

SIR: It appears that Dr. Hampton Adams ("Moments of Truth," August 1959) has never seen a bullfight. If he had he would have had a most apt illustration for his sermon, one more dramatic and meaningful than those he did use. He also would have known that this expression is much older than John Norris of the 17th century.

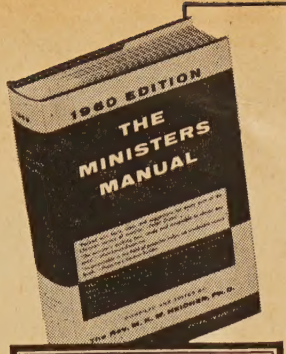
In the bull ring "the moment of truth" comes when the matador reaches over the lunging horns of the bull to slay the animal in one quick, perfectly executed stroke of his sword thrust through the back of the neck. This expression has long been associated with the sport of bullfighting which itself goes back to the days of the Roman Empire.

Robert W. Wood
First Congregational Church
Springfield Valley, N. Y.

SIR: The "Memo" of July 1959 speaks of the written word as being different from the spoken word when it comes to writing a sermon for publication.

I believe that a sermon is something that is prepared for speaking and not for writing. If it is prepared primarily to be read, then it becomes an essay and not a sermon. I hope that your selection of sermons for publication will be on the basis of those which have or can be preached orally to an assembled congregation of people.

Harold E. Buell
White Temple Methodist Church
Miami, Florida



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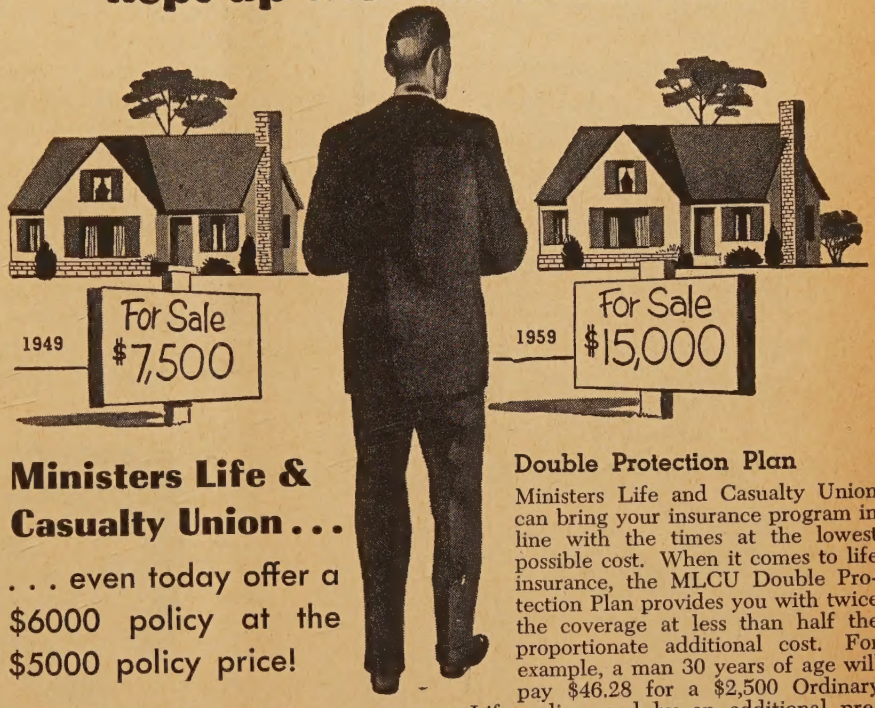

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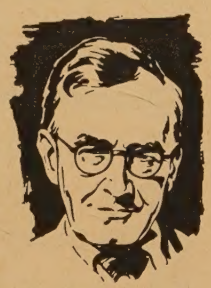

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